



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Joseph H. Hogsett
Southern District of Indiana**

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HOGSETT ANNOUNCES INDICTMENT OF TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE, TOWNSHIP CLERK IN SULLIVAN COUNTY

Elected official and his wife allegedly stole tens of thousands in taxpayer money

PRESS RELEASE

TERRE HAUTE – U.S. Attorney Joseph H. Hogsett announced this afternoon the arrest and indictment of Frank Mejean, age 51, and his wife Antonnette Mejean, age 48, both of Sullivan County. Since 2009, Frank Mejean has served as the elected Trustee of Jefferson Township, and he has employed his wife as Township Clerk and Township Investigator. The pair now face prosecution as the U.S. Attorney's Office has redoubled efforts to combat fraud and waste by public officials in Indiana through the launch of a Public Integrity Working Group.

"Our message has been consistent over the last year, but bears repeating today: it doesn't matter to me what your politics are or what position you hold in your community," Hogsett said. "If you violate the public trust, our Public Integrity Working Group will find you, will investigate you and the U.S. Attorney's Office will then prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law."

According to federal charging documents unsealed this morning, Frank Mejean has served as the elected Trustee for Jefferson Township since early 2009, and he allegedly hired his wife Antonnette to serve as Township Clerk and Township Investigator shortly after taking office. It is also alleged that he awarded his wife a lawn maintenance contract serving Jefferson Township.

From early 2009 until this morning, it is alleged that the pair engaged in a scheme to defraud taxpayers by overpaying their salaries every year, as well as overcompensating Antonnette for the lawn maintenance contract. It is also alleged that the two defendants engaged in a scheme to submit false financial documents to the Indiana State Board of Accounts to attempt to cover up these improper expenditures.

The Indictment alleges the following amounts were overpaid in salaries and compensation:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Frank M.</u>	<u>Antonnette M.</u>	<u>Lawn Care</u>
2009	\$13,343.63	\$6,091.10	\$11,687.76
2010	\$3,007.32	\$162.32	\$5,133.00
2011	\$15,378.42	\$2,239.98	\$2,803.32
2012	\$15,378.42	\$15,378.42	\$2,803.32

In addition, it is alleged that the pair used Jefferson Township funds to pay a variety of personal expenses, and also funneled taxpayer money into a business owned by Frank Mejean known as Frank Mejean Plumbing. These payments allegedly totaled tens of thousands of dollars over the last four years.

Hogsett said this case was the result of outstanding law enforcement work by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Indiana State Board of Accounts, the Indiana State Police, as well as the Internal Revenue Service. All of these agencies are partners in the U.S. Attorney's Public Integrity Working Group, which was launched in April 2012 with the stated purpose of aggressively investigating allegations of public fraud, waste and abuse by public officials in Indiana. Hoosiers with information on public corruption are encouraged to contact the U.S. Attorney's Office at (317) 229-2443.

According to Senior Litigation Counsel Bradley A. Blackington, who is prosecuting the case for the government, both defendants face three counts of wire fraud. If convicted, they could be sentenced to up to twenty years in federal prison, and they could also face significant fines and federal supervision for up to five years once they have served their prison term.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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